

## Executive Summary

The independent triennial review of Equality 2025 (Eq2025) found that although there is a continuing need for independent, confidential advice to Government drawing on the lived experience of disabled people, this does not need to continue to be delivered through a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). In fact, under the tests to qualify a need for an NDPB, the review recommended that Eq2025 should not continue as an advisory NDPB.

We ran a consultation exercise, 'Better Working with Disabled People', from July to October 2013, and engaged extensively across Government and with stakeholders. We used the outcomes from the consultation and from further engagement to decide upon an intended new set of arrangements.

An annual budget of £80,000 has been allocated to the new arrangements, including any set-up costs.

### Strategic engagement forum

The proposed strategic engagement forum, the **Fulfilling Potential Forum**, will be run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), in collaboration with the Department of Health (DH). It is intended that it will:

- **Meet on a quarterly basis, to engage in themed discussions on strategic priorities and direction, based on improving the key outcomes identified by disabled people and as set out in 'Fulfilling Potential: Making it Happen'**. The first meeting is proposed for April 2014;
- Be chaired by the Minister of State for Disabled People and the Minister of State for Care and Support;
- Identify specific issues for in-depth policy analysis, to be passed to experts from the **Fulfilling Potential Policy Advice Service**, for "Policy Lab" treatment (which consists of a short presentation on the topic or issue, followed by group discussions about policies to deal with the issue);
- Identify items for practical delivery to pass on to the **Disability Action Alliance** (DAA) or delivery organisations;
- Refer ideas on strategy relevant to **existing Government groups**, such as the Paralympic Legacy Advisory Group (PLAG), the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), or the eAccessibility Forum, to those organisations, to **complement their work** and avoid duplication.

Unlike existing Government forums, the Fulfilling Potential Forum will be **disability-specific**, having **members from a very wide range of disability**

**organisations, including smaller organisations and regional Disabled People's User-Led Organisations (DPULOs), and will cover strategy across the whole of Government.**

The Fulfilling Potential Forum will provide a community-based **route into Government, via representative organisations, for the views of disabled people**, and a route out to local disabled people, via the organisations involved, for Government Departments. Ministers and Government officials attending forum meetings will be exposed to **real issues from a local level**, of which they may not otherwise have experience. It is hoped that this active relationship and its achievements will provide a motivation for those disabled people who are not currently members of disability organisations to engage.

### **Policy advice**

The **Fulfilling Potential Policy Advice Service** will comprise a list of disability expert advisors who will provide a high-quality **input to Government policy development and implementation**. Policy makers **across central Government and beyond** will be able to access the advice of the experts to inform their work and **ensure that the needs of disabled people are considered at every stage**. The expert advisors will function on a call-off basis, with a wide range of expertise available to officials whenever this is required or beneficial as part of developing Government policy.

The list of experts on disability policy will be held as a database by a central administrative team. The details held on this database will be backed up by full **biographies of the individual experts** listed, which will be available to officials interested in accessing their advice. A reviewing mechanism will be set up to allow for the evaluation of the advice and give confidence to Government Departments commissioning advice in the credentials of the disability experts, and in the advice that they provide.

Expert advice on disability will be accessible via the administrative team **at any stage of the policy development and implementation process**. When a request is made by a policy maker for advice, their **requirements will be matched** by the administrative team to the knowledge, experience and/or qualifications of an expert or experts. Specific, practical advice may be provided by telephone or through written means, and sought face-to-face **on an individual basis or through the formation of working groups**, including those set up to consider issues through a "Policy Lab" approach.

ODI will facilitate the use of the Fulfilling Potential Policy Advice Service across Government. ODI will ensure awareness of the service, for example using mechanisms such as Open Policy Making and the network of Government Departments' Disability Champions.

The expert advisors will be paid at a daily rate pro rata, and the costs of setting up and maintaining the Fulfilling Potential Policy Advice Service, as well as managing the overheads of operating the service, will be met.

Our research suggests that the **contracting out of the Fulfilling Potential Policy Advice Service** would potentially have lower costs, and would be seen to be more independent and credible. This option should therefore provide better value for money. An invitation to tender will be published in due course.

We believe the creation of these complementary services will fulfil our ambition of broadening and improving the opportunities for disabled people to directly influence Government and be involved in the development of policies which will affect them.